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Robinson details the connections between a planet in peril and those trying to save it

The boreal forest is on fire all around the world. At the time this review was written, the sun was an eerie speck of reddish-orange in a dark and morbid sky.

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Climate change, once the problem of other countries and the world's most vulnerable people, has invited itself into the backyards of those of us who, for years, have wanted to ignore the impact of human shortsightedness, political cowardice and simple ignorance.

In 2018, just past the halfway point of the hottest year on record, the prophecies of what the scientific community has been telling us for decades have been coming true.

Planet Earth, our home, is heating up, causing erratic weather in the form of droughts, floods and raging storms. Major cities and entire countries are at risk of being inundated with water because of rising sea levels. Food and freshwater shortages are in store as the ideal pocket which has ignited our species is coming to an end as our global population is set to soar above nine billion.

But there is hope — at least according to former Irish president Mary Robinson. In her latest book *Climate Justice: Hope, Resilience, and the Fight for a Sustainable Future*, the former UN special envoy on climate change, and the creator of non-profit organizations devoted to climate change, brings forth the stories of people around the world, ordinary people who are doing the work to enlighten and protect their communities.

For Robinson, climate change is not just the phenomenon of rising global temperatures at the hands of an industrious species. Rather, "the fight against climate change is fundamentally about human rights and securing justice for those suffering from its impact — vulnerable countries and communities that are least responsible for the problem."

Robinson's storytelling, however, is not a guilt-ridden condemnation of our desire for half-ton trucks, Mexican vacations and steak houses. As the subtitle of her book suggests, her stories are about hope and about people all over the world coming to terms with the human-rights implications of climate change.

In her capacity as a veteran diplomat, Robinson has had the opportunity to visit people — mostly women — all over the world who did not choose to become advocates for their communities, but rather who have been forced to take the necessary action to legitimately keep people alive.

From Uganda to Mississippi, Vietnam to Alaska and Australia to the oil sands of Alberta, Robinson eloquently honours the narratives of those who are on the front lines of climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Robinson, in Canada's case, even makes the case that workers in our oil sands "are victims of climate change and deserve to be treated with dignity." Canada is setting up our brothers and sisters in the fossil-fuel industry for grave failure, as we are not properly prepared for the transition to clean energy. While the world's diplomats were in Paris patting each other on the back at UN climate talks, farmers, activists and human-rights defenders have been working to protect their families and communities, making fundamental change in the forms of amazing projects which have been resulting in political change.

We in the West have been the greatest contributors to the greatest threat and challenge our species has ever faced. We have paid very little for the price of our decadence, denial and desire for a lifestyle which perpetually demands that we consume more.

But as the climate change, human-rights and social-justice warriors demonstrate to us in Climate Justice, there is a new "narrative of hope" (as described by Desmond Tutu), which begins with ordinary people doing extraordinary things in order to protect their children, their communities, and the planet on which all life depends.

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